

# *Archaeological Remains near The Grange, Northwood*

by Simon Morgan

During August 2013 whilst removing an overgrown shrub in the front garden of Westwood, 9 Green Lane, I encountered a brick that I could not lift out of the soil. Careful excavation revealed that it was attached to other bricks and flints. Eventually six courses of a substantial wall were revealed.

At its southern end, a trench for a clay drainage pipe had been cut through the wall, probably in 1930s when the adjacent house was built. To the north the wall continued under a paved terrace that prevented further excavation without causing major disruption, but between these limits about one metre of wall was visible. More of the wall might therefore be found one day by excavating beyond these limits.

A layer of tiles against the sub soil is surmounted by a foundation plinth of three courses of brick, laid mainly in header bond, above which is the main wall comprising large flints in mortar, with brick dressings at corners and infilled with rubble. The width of the foundation brickwork is 440 mm, with the wall itself being around 330 mm wide. The wall is founded 840 mm below the level of the paved terrace in front of the house, making it 510 mm below the current general ground level.

The bricks appear to be hand-made, typically 210 mm long by 100 mm wide and 62 mm high, without a frog. Some have lime mortar adhering to them, with inclusions of clinker and brick. This has enabled Les Capon of AOC Archaeology Group (who led the recent Eastcote House dig) to date them as most likely around 1760 or a little earlier, but possibly anywhere between 1700 and 1850.

The width of the foundation indicated that it supported a wall of some height, perhaps 3 metres (10 feet) or more. There was no sign of any floor on either side of it, so if it formed part of a building, either the floor has been destroyed or it never had one, being a barn or other agricultural building. However, even compacted earth in such a building would have been evident had the archaeology not been disturbed. If the wall was not part of a building it could have been

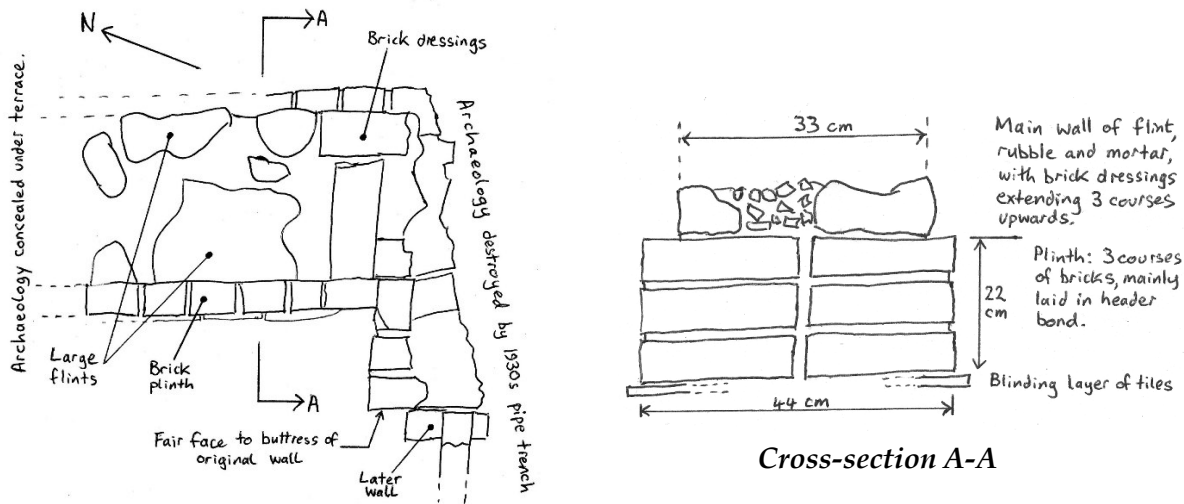
a boundary wall, but if so a substantial one, such as that around the perimeter of a major estate.

Unfortunately there were no finds that might help date the wall. There was a lot of brick, flint, tile and mortar demolition rubble, apparently of the same date as the wall itself, but no pottery shards, clay pipes, pins or coins. Checking the spoil with a metal detector before replacing it revealed only one metal item: a child's small lead cow, probably late 19th or early 20th century. It seems likely that the site was disturbed during the 1930s building works – a lot of brick and mortar demolition rubble was present in the excavated soil.

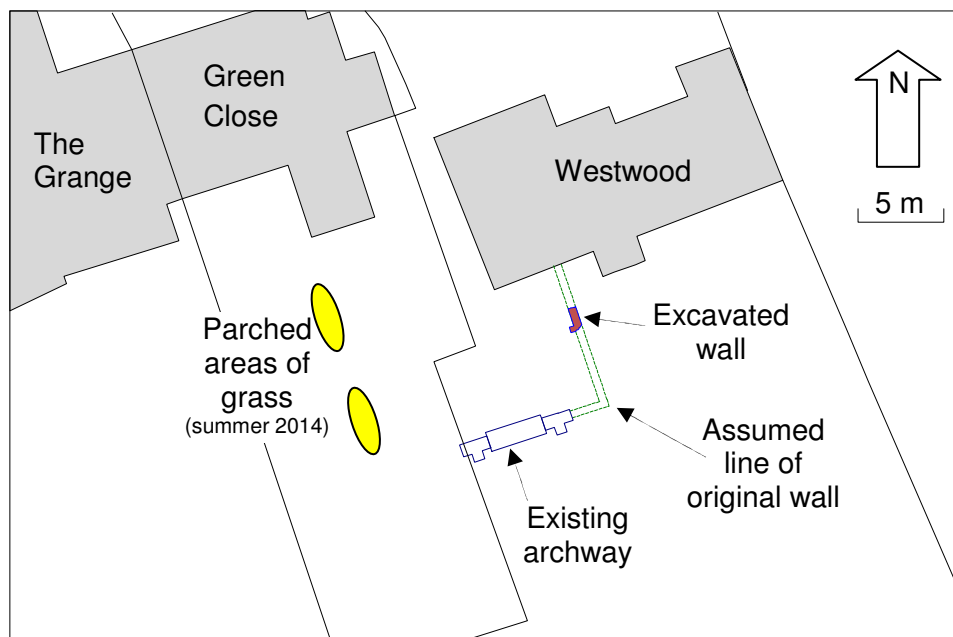


**Excavation and surveying in progress  
See Figs 1 and 2**

It initially appeared that the wall made a turn to the west and that a corner had been found. But further excavation revealed that it extended west for only 310 mm before ending with a fair face. This could have been an opening in the wall, but is probably better interpreted as a buttress, as the foundation also ends here. A later wall seems to have been constructed against this buttress that does extend further west. This wall is narrower, but also constructed of brick and flint. Its brick foundation (one brick length, 210 mm wide) is 160 mm below that of the main wall. It has not been possible to associate this newer wall with any line on a map, so perhaps it was an internal division within the postulated barn and demolished at the same time as that building.



**Fig. 1 - Sketch plan and elevation of the excavated wall - See Figs. 7 and 8**



**Fig. 2 - Site and location plan of August 2013 excavation**

### *The arch*

Surveying with a laser level indicated that the excavated wall was, to the accuracy of the survey ( $\pm 3$  degrees), orthogonal to the pillars of an archway (Fig. 3) standing in the front garden of Westwood. This arch spanned the main approach to The Grange in the late 19th century and possibly earlier. It is of uncertain date and constructed mainly of flint with brick dressings. It is therefore of very similar construction to the excavated wall, with bricks of a comparable size and colour.

The roof of the arch is modern as are brick extensions to the tops of the pillars that give it a total height of 4.1 m. The older flint construction

extends to 2.7 m above ground level, indicating that the height of the original construction was at least this.

There seems little doubt that the excavated wall was connected to this arch, particularly in view of the rough nature of the arch's eastern face, indicating that adjacent masonry was crudely removed. The west-facing edge of the arch has been neatly finished, perhaps done in the 19th century when the remainder of the structure was removed. From the extent of the demolition evidence on the east face, we may conclude that the wall it was joined to was at least 2.7 m high.



**Fig. 3 - The archway that spanned the 19th century drive to The Grange, with Green Close (left) and Westwood behind**

### *Interpretation*

The first 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of 1865 and subsequent maps do indeed show a wall in this location. See Fig. 4. In 1865 this wall formed the boundary between the grounds of the house and the field to the east. By 1895 a separate boundary structure had been constructed a few metres further east, but this wall remained, presumably enclosing the forecourt or yard within the house precincts. It is still present on the 1914 map and presumably survived until the stables and coach house of The Grange were demolished in 1933, the developer, William Telling<sup>1</sup>, clearly not troubling to remove more of the wall than necessary.

Even to form a boundary between a house and a field in the same ownership, it seems unlikely one would construct a wall 330 mm (13 inches) wide. I therefore surmise that an older wall, probably part of a building, was reused as this dividing wall.

Earlier maps are less detailed than the OS ones but might help explain this wall. The enclosure map of 1806, Fig. 6, shows The Grange as two separate buildings, but with a substantial projection to the south on the eastern one. An indenture of 1864, Fig. 5, has a detailed map attached that covers most of Northwood. I have shown previously<sup>2</sup> that this map bears such a close resemblance to the enclosure map of 1806, and has so little in common with the first OS map produced the following year, that it cannot possibly have been based upon a contemporary survey. It must have been copied from the same

early 19th century survey from which the enclosure map was made, with some minor updates particularly to building outlines. Like the enclosure map, this indenture plan also has a south wing on the easternmost building at The Grange, but shows it as a much more substantial range.

The depiction on both these plans of The Grange as two buildings is to be expected; there are two distinct roof heights and roof constructions of different dates forming the present building (which includes at its eastern end 'Green Close', now a separate house). These two structures are joined by a bay that is now the main entrance to The Grange and appears to be Victorian. Before the mid-19th century, the two separate buildings were probably the house itself and a barn or other outbuilding.

Both these plans have a pair of parallel lines heading south-east from the building that appear to represent the main drive from Green Lane. But these align with the gap between the two buildings, whereas the drive shown on the 1865 and later maps (and which exists to this day) is aligned to pass under the arch described above and then pass close to the eastern end of what is now Green Close. It therefore appears that this driveway was moved a few metres to the east sometime before 1865. This would have been an expensive operation for a 100 m long drive, but perhaps the old course was rutted and unsuitable for a new owner's carriages, making the construction of a new one easier than repairing the old.

A computer analysis that effectively stretches the modern map to fit known reference points also backs this up. Using MapInfo GIS, the modern digital map (onto which the position of the arch had been added) has been skewed and stretched using the centre lines of roads and the corners of the buildings of The Grange and Fells (a house to the north-west of The Grange) as unchanging reference points. This analysis cannot account for the inherent inaccuracy of early 19th century surveying, so a margin of error needs to be allowed. Nevertheless, for both the pre-1865 maps, the current archway appears surprisingly close to the centre of where the south wall of the demolished south range stood. This suggests that the surviving archway may have been an entrance into this south range and that the excavated wall formed part of its eastern wall.



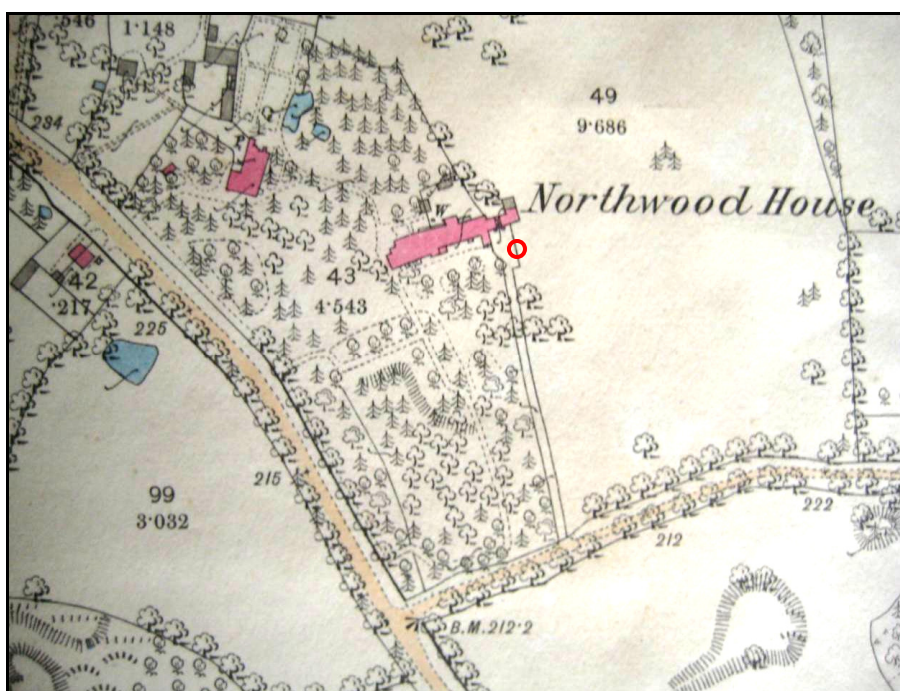
A further piece of evidence for this emerged during the hot dry summer this year. Areas of drier parched grass appeared on the front lawn of Green Close that may indicate underlying archaeology. If so, that could indicate the western wall of this front extension, although it is a significant distance, 12 m, from the excavated wall, perhaps too large to have been the opposing wall of a single structure, but totally in keeping with the Indenture Plan that also shows the lost southern wing being about 12 m wide.

An alternative explanation is that the apparent change of the position of the drive was simply down to the limitations of the surveying techniques of the time and that the drive was always in its current position. In that case, the archway would have been into a courtyard to the west of the south range and the excavated wall would have been part of the west wall of this range. But either way, it appears that we have found evidence of this lost south range of The Grange.

In view of the lack of evidence of a floor on either side of the excavated wall, I suggest that the south range was a barn or similar outbuilding that had an earth floor. Were the present archway to have formed part of its south wall, there is no other type of building that would have required such a large opening: 3.1 metres wide and around 3 m tall; but a large opening in the end wall of a barn would be unusual, barn doors normally being at the centre of each side.

The dating of an excavated brick and its mortar to around 1760 fits with the map evidence that the wall is earlier than the enclosure map of 1806. It presumably dates the pillars of the surviving arch to the same period and makes the archway older than had been previously assumed. The porch of Green Close is constructed of similar bricks and flints, and can be dated from map evidence to the mid 19th century. It was perhaps constructed in 1839 by Nathaniel Soames at the time he set up a chapel of ease in Northwood, most likely in this building<sup>3</sup>. The similarity of the construction of this porch to that of the archway had led to the assumption they were contemporary, but it now seems that the archway must be at least 80 years earlier.

The archway itself does not appear on any Ordnance Survey map, not even the current one. It is presumably an OS policy not to show such free-standing structures within private grounds, even one as substantial as this. An L-shaped dividing wall is however evident on all large-scale maps from 1865 until the site was redeveloped in 1930s, and it is clearly a portion of this that has been exposed in this excavation. Although just an internal garden feature for much of the 19th and 20th centuries, it was nevertheless a large structure, at least 2.7 m high. It is reasonable to assume it was this height because it was the remains of the east wall of the outbuilding that projected to the south of The Grange on the early 19th century mapping.



**Fig. 4 - Detail from 1865 1:2500 OS map. An added red circle indicates the excavation.**

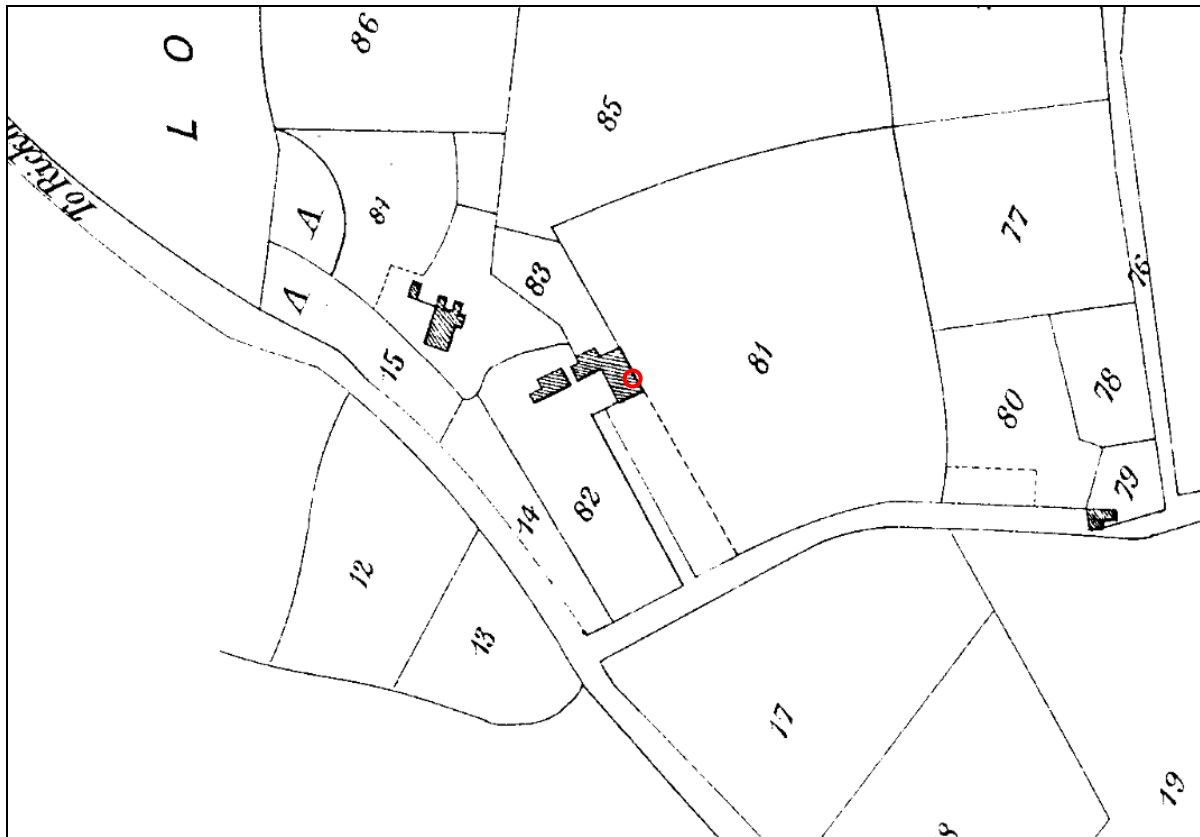


Fig. 5 - Detail from a plan in an indenture of 1864<sup>4</sup>, but based upon an earlier survey. The possible location of the excavation is indicated with a red circle



Fig. 6 - Detail from the Ruislip Enclosure Plan of 1806<sup>5</sup>





**Fig. 7 - The entire excavation from above**  
**A 1930s drainage pipe cuts through the archaeology at the south**



**Fig. 8 - The excavated wall from the south**  
**A brick and a flint at the bottom are newer work built against a buttress of the main wall.**

<sup>1</sup> Morgan, S, WA Telling & the development of 'The Grange' Estate, Northwood, *RNELHS Journal* 1997

<sup>2</sup> Morgan, S, The Changing shape of 'The Fells', *RNELHS Journal* 1997

<sup>3</sup> Morgan, S, The Chapel of Ease at Northwood, *RNELHS Journal* 2000

<sup>4</sup> Abstract of title of FMMH Carew to the Eastbury Estate, dated 1887, but reciting a transaction of 1864, Local History Collection, Manor Farm, Ruislip (The Grange, Northwood file)

<sup>5</sup> Original Enclosure map held at National Archive. Photographic copy in the possession of RNELHS